

Sweet Spring Weddings

SUGAR LAND BRIDES SHARE WEDDING MEMORIES & TIPS

Written by Crystal Rawls

"I am only going to do this thing once," says bride-to-be Stephanie Broussard of her upcoming nuptials. That's why Broussard chose to forego the use of a wedding coordinator, relying instead on current trends and her own instincts and tastes to organize the perfect day.

Each detail becomes a precious memento of a once-in-a-lifetime celebration. And, from the dress to flowers, cakes to music, photographs to faux pas, fashion-conscious brides can be quite overwhelmed by the plethora of trendy options before them. To help sort through the latest styles, local wedding professionals and brides-to-be offered their take on current trends, helping other Sugar Land couples plan the perfect celebration.

SOMETHING OLD

Modern brides don't necessarily have to stay with what is current and new in order to pull off a sophisticated wedding. Sugar Land bride Cristina Martin (née Frith), who was married recently to Jacob, used music to mix traditional favorites with modern trends to create an unforgettable, very personal wedding.

"I worked really hard on the music selection because it's so important to me," she said. "I picked songs that were traditional, yet others that were not, but had special meaning. For instance, the song I walked down the aisle to is an old hymn played beautifully on the piano. I chose it over the traditional bridal march ... I picked about 20 classic romance-inspiring songs to be played during the cocktail hour; greats like Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, and Louis Armstrong. I wanted everyone to share, with Jacob and me, the great feeling of first love."

Like the Frith-Martin wedding, it is quite fashionable for wedding guests to cut a rug to the sounds of 80s cover bands, classic rock, and swing orchestras. "Traditional ceremonies will always be in style," says Angela Brisbane, owner of AlexanderMikal Bridal. "Brides can mix a bit of the old with the new and still pull off a fashionable wedding." "Things like reciting personally written vows, or having both the mother and the father of the bride walk the bride down (the aisle), can add a touch of modern and still pay homage to tradition," she says.

Of course, weddings today are quite unlike weddings from generations before.



Breonna Watson photographed by Candace Byers Photography



Meredith McDonald of Greatwood photographed by Candace Byers Photography

SOMETHING NEW

These days, with computers, electronic gadgets and text messaging, it stands to reason that wedding planning in 2008 would require a bit of creative technology. After getting engaged in July 2007, Broussard utilized weddingchannel.com to post wedding details for family and friends. There, loved ones read about Matthew Hartfiel's enchanting proposal to Broussard. As the website counts down to the big day, guests can peruse photos of the happy couple and wedding party, stay up-to-date on event details, and even browse the wedding registry with a mouse click.

Brisbane suggests using the Internet to save paper in an effort to be environmentally friendly. In fact, many modern brides are opting for a "green" wedding. "Planning weddings that are socially and environmentally conscious is a big trend that is hopefully here to stay," says Brisbane. "There are tons of creative ideas out there: invitations printed on recycled paper, using the Internet and personalized websites that give information about the wedding ... planning the wedding and ceremony either at the same location or nearby each other to cut down on fuel costs. "Allowing guests to give donations in your name to a local charity instead of a gift, giving attendant gifts from local artists or underprivileged artists ... donating leftover food or donating your flowers to local nursing homes or assisted living center (are) great ideas," she says.



Jennifer Schobey's bridal session photographed by Clayton Wallace Photography

And that modern personalization even applies to the food. “Yes ... the cake! I love it,” exclaims Broussard, whose wedding cake consists of two small tiered cakes shaped to reflect a mini bride and groom. “It’s not the traditional at all. Not sure how I can describe it but it’s way cool!”

Today’s cakes push fancy to the extreme. Adorned with flowers, metallic embellishments, and rich, bold colors to accent the traditional white, cakes have become edible art. Taking it one step further, some bridal “cakes” consist of cookies, cupcakes, ice cream, and even donuts. Like the traditional groom’s cake, the bride’s wedding cake is a true reflection of her own personality.

SOMETHING BORROWED

With all that wedding planning entails, it never hurts to save a few dollars. For brides on a budget, there is always the option of renting expensive name brand goodies for a significantly discounted price. Sites such as bagborrowandsteal.com allow brides to rent their desired accessory and keep it for as long as needed. Imagine – Vera Wang diamond earrings or a Chanel bracelet for less than \$100.

In addition, “borrowing” input from friends and family is a great way to get ideas, but the wedding ultimately belongs to the bride and groom. “One of the biggest pieces of advice I can give is to really enjoy the whole engagement, don’t stress over the small things. It’s really a lot of fun and there are so many people who will have their own advice to offer,” says Martin. “Make it a point to

hear them out, and even take some of it! I don’t think there is anything wrong with having big dreams and ideas about your special day, but remember to be a little level-headed, make it your own for sure, and have lots of fun in the process!”

SOMETHING BLUE

From the cake to the flowers to the dresses, bright, bold colors and sparkly metallics are how modern brides make their weddings memorable.

As for wedding dresses, anything that glistens and glitters is in; crystal, beading, rhinestones, sparkly embroidered lace. “Traditional white is always in, however, brides and designers are opting for subtle alternatives such as champagnes, light golds and ecru for gowns,” says Martin. For bridesmaids, mango is a hot color, as well as tonal colors; cafe, mocha, ivory, gold, tonal melons, and deep sage greens. Colors seem to be richer rather than your traditional pastels.”

Martin used colors to create the atmosphere she wanted for her wedding. “Colors are huge right now, from deep bold colors to pastels and even hints of silver and gold,” says Martin. “I picked my palette based off my favorite colors. I wanted to incorporate romance and lighting, so I really thought about what colors would create the ambiance.”



Jennifer Townsend in front of Sugar Land's New Territory Fountain photographed by Candace Byers Photography

Wedding Photographers

Thank you to these Sugar Land area photographers who submitted bridal shots for this issue.

Dana Kestler Photography
 DanaKestlerPhotography.com
 281-240-9651

Clayton Wallace Photography
 ClaytonWallace.com
 832-693-4762

Candace Byers
 CandaceByersPhotography.com
 281-545-9898

JoeyT Photography
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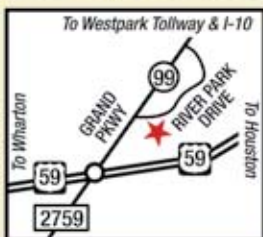
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FAVORITE COLORS

POPULAR WEDDING COLORS INCLUDE

- ◆ Mango
- ◆ Browns: café, mocha
- ◆ Ivory
- ◆ Gold
- ◆ Greens: lime and sage
- ◆ Silver
- ◆ Melon
- ◆ Purple
- ◆ Fuchsia Purple



Kimberly Boenker in Telfair photographed by JoeyT Photography

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WEDDING FUN FACTS



Caitlin and the girls
by Clayton Wallace
Photography

WEDDING COSTS

The average Sugar Land wedding costs \$52,560.
The average cost of a wedding in the U.S. is \$28,800.

WEDDING GUESTS

On average, weddings will have 189 guests.

WEDDING MONTH

June is the most popular month for weddings, then August, followed by September, October and May

ENGAGEMENT LENGTH

The average engagement period is 16 months.

FORMAL OR CASUAL

80% of brides will plan formal weddings.

SECOND WEDDINGS

In almost half of weddings, either the bride or groom has been married previously.

WEDDING PLANNING

The majority of brides plan their weddings for 7 to 12 months.

WEDDING GOWNS

The average amount spent on a bridal gown is \$800.

WEARING WHITE

Queen Victoria made white the bridal color of choice when she wore it to wed Prince Albert in 1840.

BRIDESMAIDS

The most frequent number of bridesmaids is four.

WEDDING CEREMONY

53% of weddings occur in the afternoon; 31% in the evening; 16% in the morning

THE HONEYMOON

The average Honeymoon is a week long and costs \$3,471. The top honeymoon destinations are the Caribbean, Hawaii and Mexico.

Nontraditional colors are even popular for the flowers. Wedding florist Vanessa Welty, of Occasions by Cindy, recently noticed light lime green and fuchsia making wedding appearances. According to Welty, spring weddings are usually best for the availability of essentially all types of fresh flowers. "The closer you get to summer, the slower it gets (for weddings)," she says. "There aren't many weddings in Sugar Land in the summer because it's so hot. I think the fall is a great time to have a wedding." That's when arrangements include natural oak leaves, orange roses, snapdragons, sunset lilies, and dendrobium orchids. Finally, winter weddings display more greenery and berries. Ultimately, says Welty, every wedding should be custom made. "A wedding has to be personal," she says. "Don't pick something out of a magazine or be a cookie cutter. It's your special day, and it should be exactly the way you want it."

Whether a bride chooses to stick with tradition, or keep up with the times, the prevalent theme is to plan a wedding that is a one-of-a-kind event that celebrates the joining of two individuals as one. Make it yours. **SLM**

CRYSTAL RAWLS, a Sugar Land area resident, is a marketing specialist by day and a freelance writer by night.



Kristin Lee photographed by JoeyT Photography

WEDDING TO DOS

Kasey and Brad Fink's engagement session photographed by Candace Byers Photography

Be sure to reserve the necessary people and places early:

- Wedding and reception locations
- Minister or ceremony officiate
- Photographer
- Florist
- Invitations
- Musicians

Once the necessary locations and officials have been set, you can turn your attention to the finer details such as:

- Cake and caterer
- Wedding dress
- Bridesmaid's and flower girl's dresses
- Smaller personal details

Brittney and Billy Boyd's engagement session by Clayton Wallace Photography



Lyndsey and Richard of Sugar Land photographed by Candace Byers Photography



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SUGAR LAND AREA WEDDING VENUES

Sweet and Romantic Places to Get Married Close to Home

Great Oaks Manor Bed & Breakfast

Corner of Macek Road and Rabbs Crossing in
Greatwood area
281-343-9551
greatoaksmanor.com

This 3-story Greek revival mansion is resplendent in period architectural details, including six fireplaces, vintage moldings, oak floors and a grand sweeping staircase embellished with stunning original stained glass windows that shine into the stately foyer. This is a great place for a small wedding and wedding reception for 2 to 100 people.

Heaven on Earth

1 Douglas Lane
Missouri City
281-499-1840
HeavenonEarthWeddings.com

As you approach this facility, you may feel as though you have traveled back into time, as the 1898 plantation house comes into view. The entire Victorian-themed facility has expanded over the past 30 years to cover two city blocks. They offer a wedding coordinator, florist, photographer, chapel, and caterer.



Great Oaks Manor Bed and Breakfast



Safari Texas Ranch



Tori photographed by Candance Byers

Safari Texas Ranch

11627 FM 1464
Richmond
281-277-7888
SafariTexasBallroom.com

A 44-acre private estate, Safari Texas Ranch has three gazebos and six unique banquet rooms, which provide food and beverage service for the traditional wedding reception, as well as many other types of celebrations. The facility can host events for 50 to 850 people.

Sugar Land Marriott Town Square

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Sugar Land
281-275-8400
sugarlandmarriott.com






For grand scale events, the new Sugar Land Marriott Town Square rises to the occasion. The 15,500 square foot ballroom is among Houston's largest. The Sugar Land Marriott is designed to accommodate weddings, multicultural celebrations, galas and social events for 500 to 1,500 people.

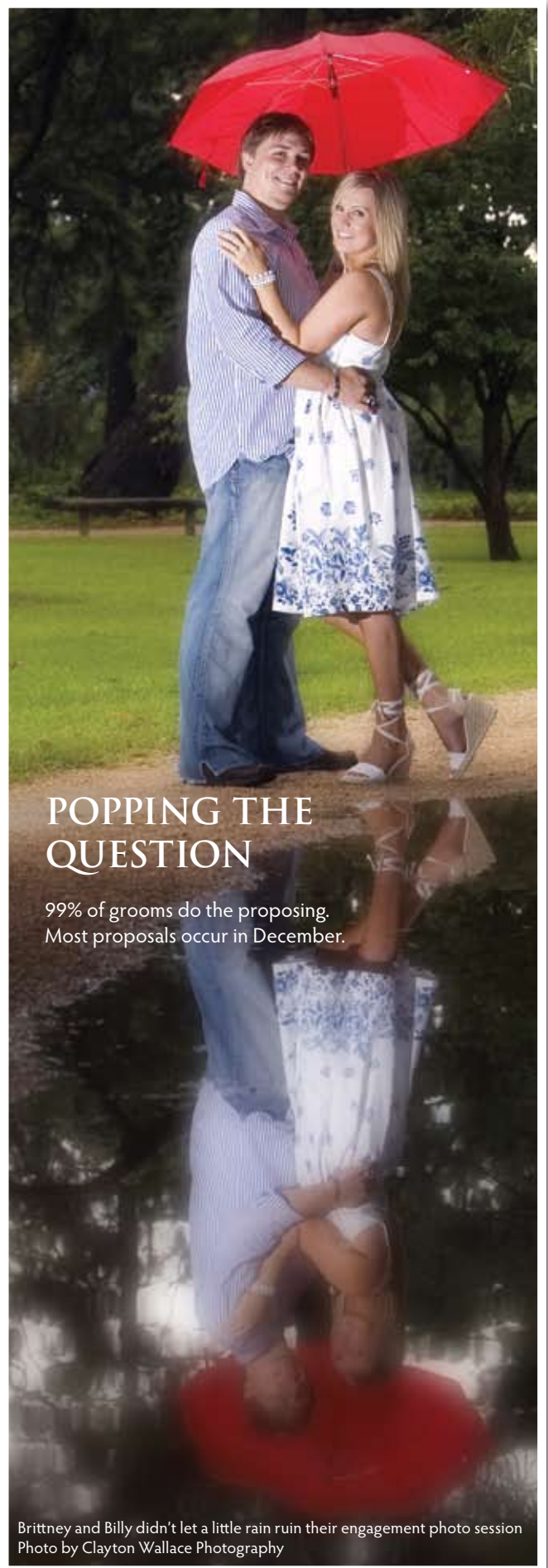
PERFECT PROPOSALS



Courtney and Timon Marshall Photo by Candace Byers Photography

Here are a few proposal ideas to help assure her answer is yes!

-  Plan a surprise getaway to sweep your future fiancé off her feet. Whether you choose to disguise it as a much needed vacation or a last-minute business trip, impromptu travel sets the scene for an unforgettable engagement.
-  The element of surprise is at its best when it appears amidst everyday circumstances. It turns a normal occurrence into something spectacular.
-  Plan a surprise engagement party. In the midst of celebrating your love for each other, share the moment with your closest friends and family.
-  Make a personalized gift. Utilize your strength as an artist and create a one-of-a-kind memento for your fiancé-to-be. Whether it's a hand-carved jewelry box, a drawing, or a poem, something from the heart will be sure to elicit a resounding yes.
-  Go back to where it all began. Take her to where you first met or recreate your first date. If you choose to propose in a restaurant (a more popular choice), be sure to call ahead and get advice from the staff. They may even help you arrange the perfect surprise.



POPPING THE QUESTION

99% of grooms do the proposing.
Most proposals occur in December.

Brittny and Billy didn't let a little rain ruin their engagement photo session
Photo by Clayton Wallace Photography